

**Nueces Estuary Advisory Council (NEAC) Meeting  
Tuesday, April 23, 2013, 10:00  
Harte Research Institute  
Texas A&M University– Corpus Christi  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chris Loft, Chair; Ray Allen; Teresa Carillo; Paul Carangelo; Paul Orser; Carola Serrato; Pat Suter; Wes Tunnell; Brent Clayton; James Tolan; Brent Clayton; Bill Mahan; Kathleen Mahan; Ruben Solis

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Chris Loft, Chair called the meeting to order. The NEAC members and alternates present introduced themselves.

**Public Comment**

No public comments were made at this time.

**Approval of January 30, 2013 Minutes**

Members unanimously approved the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 minutes.

**Review and Approval NEAC membership**

An updated list of current members and alternates was provided to the NEAC members present. In addition, members unanimously approved Kathleen and Bill Mahan to represent the interest group Save Lake Corpus Christi. Members also discussed the need to establish a quorum and decided no such need exists at this time.

**Legislative Update and Funding**

Members were provided an update on the status of Tom Ballou's and others meetings with state representative Todd Hunter concerning possible legislative funding for work plan implementation. Ruben Solis, TWDB, informed the members of an amendment by Alan Ritter to HB4 which would set aside funding for work plan implementation. The amendment calls for the SAC to prioritize finding for basin groups and submit their recommendations to the EFAG. Members requested that an update on the legislative session and possible avenues of funding be on agenda at the next NEAC meeting.

**Re-Establishing the Allison WWTP Diversion Project**

Member Ray Allen presented information on the background of the Allison Waste Water Treatment Pilot Project and the efforts currently ongoing to re-establish the project. He indicated that the purpose of the pilot project, which spanned over a decade from the 1990's on, was to release treated waste water (up to 2 MGD) into the Nueces Delta and evaluate the impacts of restored freshwater inputs to the system. A pipeline was built under the river to transport treated water to small retention ponds, built by the City of Corpus on leased land, adjacent to South Lake. In the agreed order, the City was permitted to discharge into both the Nueces River and Delta with effluent ammonia limits of 12 mg/L and 4 mg/L, respectively. Mr. Allen indicated that in August 2012 all

discharges into the delta were ceased because the City was not meeting the 4 mg/L ammonia effluent criteria. Mr. Allen stated that several studies and data collections were undertaken during the pilot project by the University of Texas Marine Science Institute and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Center for Coastal Studies to evaluate the effects of discharges into the delta. The overall results of the studies indicated that the impacts of increased ammonia were minimal in extent (i.e. no traces were observed beyond 1,000 feet of the discharge point), while several beneficial effects to the system were observed, such as available habitat for migratory birds. James Tolan, TPWD, also indicated that the frequency of algae blooms, periods of low oxygen, and number of fish kills decreased.

Members inquired as to whether the retention ponds were considered a tertiary treatment method, what location(s) were ammonia monitored, whether all water from the waste water treatment plant was discharged into the delta, how often did the City fail to meet effluent limitations, and where does the City currently discharge? Mr Allen stated that the ponds are not considered a tertiary treatment, ammonia concentrations were measured at the point of discharge from the pipe rather than from the ponds, he did not know the frequency and range of ammonia exceedances, and that the City currently discharges its treated effluent into the Nueces River. Mr. Allen stated that the major limiting factor to the project was adhering to the 4 mg/L ammonia effluent limitation. Members were informed that on May 7, 2013 several members would be meeting with TCEQ to discuss the project's history, path to re-establishment, and possible strategies to resolve the ammonia effluent limitation issues. It was stated that the general stakeholder consensus among the BBEST, BBASC, and NEAC was supportive of the Allison WWTP Diversion Project.

### **Agreed Order and Options for Water Banking and SMART**

Members continued discussion from the last NEAC meeting on water banking and SMART management of freshwater inflows. Chair, Chris Loft, informed the members that the agreed order could be amended to incorporate water banking, but the banking would be subject to evaporative losses and would need to have an accounting plan. Also, TCEQ legal staff determined that the agreed order as it stands does not allow for the flexibility to continue banking at this time. Chair Loft stated that the options are to modify the order or apply for either a temporary or term permit. He also indicated that temporary permits are only for 3 years, are granted only once, and have limited notice and review. Further, term permits can be granted for a maximum of 10 years but have substantial more review and notification requirements leading to the potential for a greater number of protestants. Members discussed which type of amendment permit would be appropriate, what type of protests might be encountered, and who would be the responsible party for filing the amendment. Members were in agreement that a temporary permit lasting for 3 years would be too short to be useful and identified the City of Corpus as the entity that would need to submit the amendment. Members also discussed whether focusing on refining current models (e.g. TXBLEND, etc.) and/or funding new models to evaluate banking as a viable method of increasing freshwater inflows to the delta would be better than applying for modification of the order. While members thought that additional modeling would be beneficial, members expressed

strongly that the NEAC's next steps should be to urge the City to amend the existing order to allow for banking and SMART inflow management.

**Other items identified by NEAC members**

Teresa Carillo, member, stated she would like the City of Corpus Christi to invest more into water conservation measures, such as tiered fees, rebates, etc. She inquired as to whether the NEAC was interested in supporting a stronger water conservation plan for the City. Mr. Allen and others stated that this is not necessarily in the purview of the NEAC and recommended that this be done on an individual basis by members if they wished to be involved.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the NEAC is tentatively scheduled for September 26, 2013 at 1:30 p.m.

**Public Comment**

No public comment at this time.

**Adjourn**